

Chapter Two: Concept Plan

2.1 Introduction

The nonresidential areas of Bixby Knolls have a wide range of commercial, retail and office uses. A majority of these are neighborhood serving uses, such as convenience stores, personal services, specialty retail stores, fast food restaurants and auto-related uses, although there are also several commercial, financial and medical office buildings distributed throughout the study area. Most of the neighborhood serving retail uses can be found along Atlantic Avenue with most of the office uses located along Long Beach Boulevard.

The building stock in this area is mixed in its life span. There are several buildings from the 1930's - 1960's, several from the 1970's and 1980's and some that have been recently built. The condition of these buildings is also mixed. For the most part, the office buildings are well maintained, as are some of the retail structures. However, there are several neglected and deteriorating buildings in both areas. There are also some historically significant buildings in this area that not only serve as icons for the Bixby Knolls area but also for Southern California.

Due to the age of this business district, many of the properties have experienced numerous changes in ownership and occupancy. And while each successive occupant may not have altered the architecture and landscaping, the signs have always changed. Over the years as the signs have been replaced without any design guidelines, there has been a decline in their quality and an increase in their quantity. Additionally, many of the current signs no longer complement the architectural style of their building. These issues, along with scanty and poorly maintained landscaping adversely affect the physical environment on both Long Beach Boulevard and Atlantic Avenue.

2.2 Existing Conditions: Atlantic Avenue

2.2.1 Land Use and Building Character

Atlantic Avenue is neighborhood-retail oriented, serving the area's strong residential core with restaurants, home/office supplies, home furnishings and specialty shops. There are also a large number of medical office uses distributed along the southern half of Atlantic Avenue. On the northern edge of Bixby Knolls is the Bixby Knolls Shopping Center, which includes a Vons Supermarket, an Orchard Supply Hardware (OSH) and a variety of neighborhood-serving stores with additional renovation in the planning stages. A



Street view: Atlantic Avenue

retail development that includes a Trader Joe's market is located a few blocks south of the shopping center. Most of the buildings along this corridor are one-to-two stories in height with several structures as high as eight-to-ten stories.

2.2.2 Traffic & Parking

Atlantic Avenue is very wide with two lanes and on-street parking on both sides of the street. Traffic speeds are high and volumes fairly heavy. A landscaped median is present in one block, between Roosevelt and Bixby Roads. Most of the retail structures are at the property edge or setback by a few feet, almost all parking is provided either behind the buildings or on the street.

There is no median from San Antonio Drive to Roosevelt Road. The width of the street provides a special challenge to make the retail environment function successfully. Diagonal parking is provided on the east side in this section of Atlantic Avenue with parallel parking on the west side of the street. In the block between Roosevelt Road and Bixby Road, a median is present with parallel parking on both sides of the street. In the rest of Atlantic Avenue, the street width is too narrow to accommodate a median. There is parallel parking on both sides.

2.2.3 Architectural Styles

The architectural styles observed in the study area are generally from the early to mid 20th century. These styles, also known as 'Art Moderne,' 'Streamline Moderne' or 'Zigzag Moderne' includes features such as tripartite facades with centralized entrances, large glass panels, façade moldings, curved surfaces, vertical and horizontal moldings, and projecting slab canopies. Signage in this style includes projecting roof signs, stylized period lettering, neon usage, etc.

Other buildings along Atlantic Avenue display typical retail facades with large expanses of glass windows, slab canopies or awnings. The office buildings along this corridor are stylistically different, having a variety of materials such as stucco and brick. A common characteristic observed along Atlantic Avenue is that many of the corner buildings have chamfered or rounded corners with canopies extending out over the sidewalk. This feature provides an opportunity to establish a certain rhythm as one travels along the street. (See photos on page 9).

The shopping center (north of San Antonio Drive on Atlantic Avenue) has partially been renovated with new uses. However, the new structures provide a blank face to Atlantic Avenue. OSH (Orchard Supply Hardware) presents a blank wall to the street with no entrances on the street face. The block to the immediate north of OSH (with stores such as Payless Shoe Source) faces the street. While the architectural style of these stores has no relationship with the prevalent styles in Bixby Knolls, this block has corner building elements that are higher than the rest of the building, a design feature that helps emphasize corners and thus accentuating transition to the side streets.



OSH Store in shopping center: blank wall facing Atlantic Avenue

2.2.4 Signage & Graphics

Sign blight is more of a problem on Atlantic Avenue than Long Beach Boulevard due to the greater number of retail businesses. More than office buildings, retail businesses correctly regard signs as an advertising medium for their goods and services. But when this marketing impulse is not tempered by the application of design guidelines, the result can be counterproductive. Many retail businesses cover their facades with so many signs that their message is obscured rather than understood.



While there are several new commercial buildings in the area, a great many of the small to medium size properties are of an age and condition that no longer attract retail tenants with the capitalization or marketing sophistication one would have found here twenty or thirty years ago. This condition frequently leads to an excessive number of signs resulting in a visual blight that undermines the economic prosperity of the district.

OSH Store in shopping center: Garden Center presents a more friendly facade to the street.

These design guidelines in general, and specifically the sign design guidelines, are intended as a marketing tool to create a better business climate for increased sales.

2.2.5 Landscape

There is a lack of a consistent pattern of street trees. Scattered palms (40-60 feet tall) are observed throughout the corridor. Some new trees have also been planted recently in front of the block at Claiborne Drive and in a demonstration block between Roosevelt and Bixby Roads. New plants and trees have been planted in the median present in the same block.

2.2.6 Vacant Sites

There are very few vacant sites along Atlantic Avenue, although there are several vacant storefronts.

2.3 Problems and Opportunities: Atlantic Avenue

2.3.1 Problems

- The length of corridor is too long for it to be one cohesive district.
- The street is very wide, making it hard for the two retail edges to be perceived as one environment.
- High speed of traffic further divides the two sides apart.
- The street landscaping is poorly maintained and is discontinuous.
- Narrow pedestrian sidewalks detract from a pedestrian friendly environment.
- The neglect of some of the buildings highlights the perception of obsolete building stock in the district.



A typical corner building along Atlantic Avenue that makes use of its location with a higher parapet and corner entrance.



The Bank of America building with the corner blocked off. The entrance should be located at the corner with glass windows that allow views into the bank.



The building is of the Art Moderne era and has good potential for being renovated successfully. The overuse and the poor quality of signage detracts substantially from the visual street environment.



This structure with its curved facade and projecting slab canopy is a good example of a corner building. However, the signage detracts from its success in this location.



The district has several structures from the 1930's and 1940's.

- Some of the store entrances are counter-intuitive, signage and landscaping is at one end of the building, while the entrance is at the other. Some of the corner buildings do not take advantage of their location by providing their entrances at the corners.
- The shopping center (OSH store) turns its back to the street.
- The number of signs on each business has increased to the detriment of consumer understanding and consequently the financial decline of the Avenue.
- A decline in the quality of the signs has also diminished the Avenue's image.
- A majority of signs have no visual unity with their building and therefore miss the opportunity to promote a district visual style.
- Some of the signs fail to serve their building functionally by not properly identifying the building entry.

2.3.2 Opportunities

- The length of the corridor provides a potential to create subdistricts along the corridor.
- The width of street allows for the potential to either extend the median and/or provide bulb-outs at block ends to narrow pedestrian crossings and slow traffic.
- Contiguous storefronts allow for continuous pedestrian and retail activity.
- In the shopping center to the north of San Antonio on Atlantic Avenue, there is an opportunity to renovate the vacant retail block with a focus towards the street.
- There is an opportunity to make the triangular traffic island (located on the northeast corner of the intersection of San Antonio drive and Atlantic Avenue) a visual amenity for the district. This can be the location of an entry monument for traffic coming from the north.
- The concentration of architectural styles allows for further enhancement of the street and creation of a cohesive character.
- The corners of buildings designed to address street intersections allow for an emphasis on these intersections as well as provide the potential for a rhythm to be developed along the length of the corridor.
- The emphasis at the intersections can be further highlighted with increased building massing and entrances at these corners.
- A dynamic mix of business categories and building sizes allows for a visual change of pace and avoids monotony.
- Pedestrian character of the corridor allows signs to vary in size and reading distance so their information can be understood in a logical sequence of importance.
- The implementation of guidelines will make a dramatic positive impact because of the dominance of signs in the streetscape.

2.4 Existing Conditions: Long Beach Boulevard

2.4.1 Land Uses & Building Character

The uses along Long Beach Boulevard consist primarily of professional offices and financial institutions. There are several motels along this corridor as well. The building character along this corridor is low-rise commercial and retail buildings (one-to-two stories) with a few high-rise office buildings (eight-to-ten stories). Most of the buildings are in good condition and are well maintained. However, there are several vacant buildings that have fallen into disrepair. Signage of these aging buildings reflects the same lack of care. Some of the motel buildings along this corridor are also in poor condition.

2.4.2 Traffic & Parking

Long Beach Boulevard is a four-lane vehicular corridor that links up with the 710 and 91 freeways on the north and the 405 freeway on the south as it continues southward to Downtown Long Beach. Traffic along Long Beach Boulevard is fairly light, but speeds are high. On-street parking is allowed along the length of the corridor. Most of the office buildings provide off-street parking, generally in the front, with the office buildings set back. (See example on page 12). The high-rise buildings provide underground parking while the motels provide parking behind the buildings.



Street view: Long Beach Boulevard

2.4.3 Architectural Styles

The architectural styles of the office buildings along Long Beach Boulevard range from modern or 'International Style' of the 1930-1950's to the Californian 'post and beam' style of the 1950's and 1960's. The office buildings in the International Style display common features such as ribbon windows, piloti, lack of ornamentation and structure independent of the skin. Some of the offices are in low-rise suites set in landscaped surroundings that characterize an archetypal Californian suburban relationship of the indoor with the outdoors.

2.4.4 Signage & Graphics

The prevalent businesses on Long Beach Boulevard, professional offices, motels and service retail, are generally restrained in the design of their signs. However, there are a significant number of properties that would benefit from the application of sign design guidelines. Some of the businesses have roof signs that are prohibited in the zoning code. These signs should be removed. Other businesses have simple

rectangular sign cabinets that are discouraged by BKBIA. Many of the business signs do not support the style or the functionality of the building's architecture. These inconsistencies mount up to a negative perception that the district is obsolete.

2.4.5 Landscape

While the narrow sidewalks prevent a continuous pattern of street trees throughout the corridor, lush landscaping and trees within the setbacks of most buildings add to the verdant character of this corridor. This landscaping is generally well maintained.



One of several developments where offices in low-rise suites are set in landscaped surroundings that characterize a typical Californian relationship of the indoor with the outdoors. This congregation is unique to the Bixby Knolls area.



A more recent low-rise office park along the corridor provides a compatible scale to the residential neighborhood. Off-street parking and landscaping add to the suburban feel of the development.

2.4.6 Vacant Sites

There are several vacant lots along Long Beach Boulevard, all of them on the eastern side of the street. One of these vacant lots is on the southeast corner of Long Beach Boulevard and Bixby Road. There are also several under-utilized parcels that may provide opportunity for future development.

2.5 Problems and Opportunities: Long Beach Boulevard

2.5.1 Problems

- There may be a conflict between the maximum utilization of property and the creation of neighborhood friendly commercial structures.
- The lack of a continuous pattern of street trees detracts from the cohesive suburban nature of this street.
- The vacant sites and the poor condition of several of the older buildings are detrimental to the visual character of the corridor.
- The quality of some of the deteriorating structures including motels along this corridor adversely affects the overall character of the street.
- Sign numbers and content (information) have increased to an amount that cannot realistically be understood from moving vehicles.
- The quality (cost) of signs has fallen below the original quality of the corridor.
- Signs no longer reflect the visual style of the building.

2.5.2 Opportunities

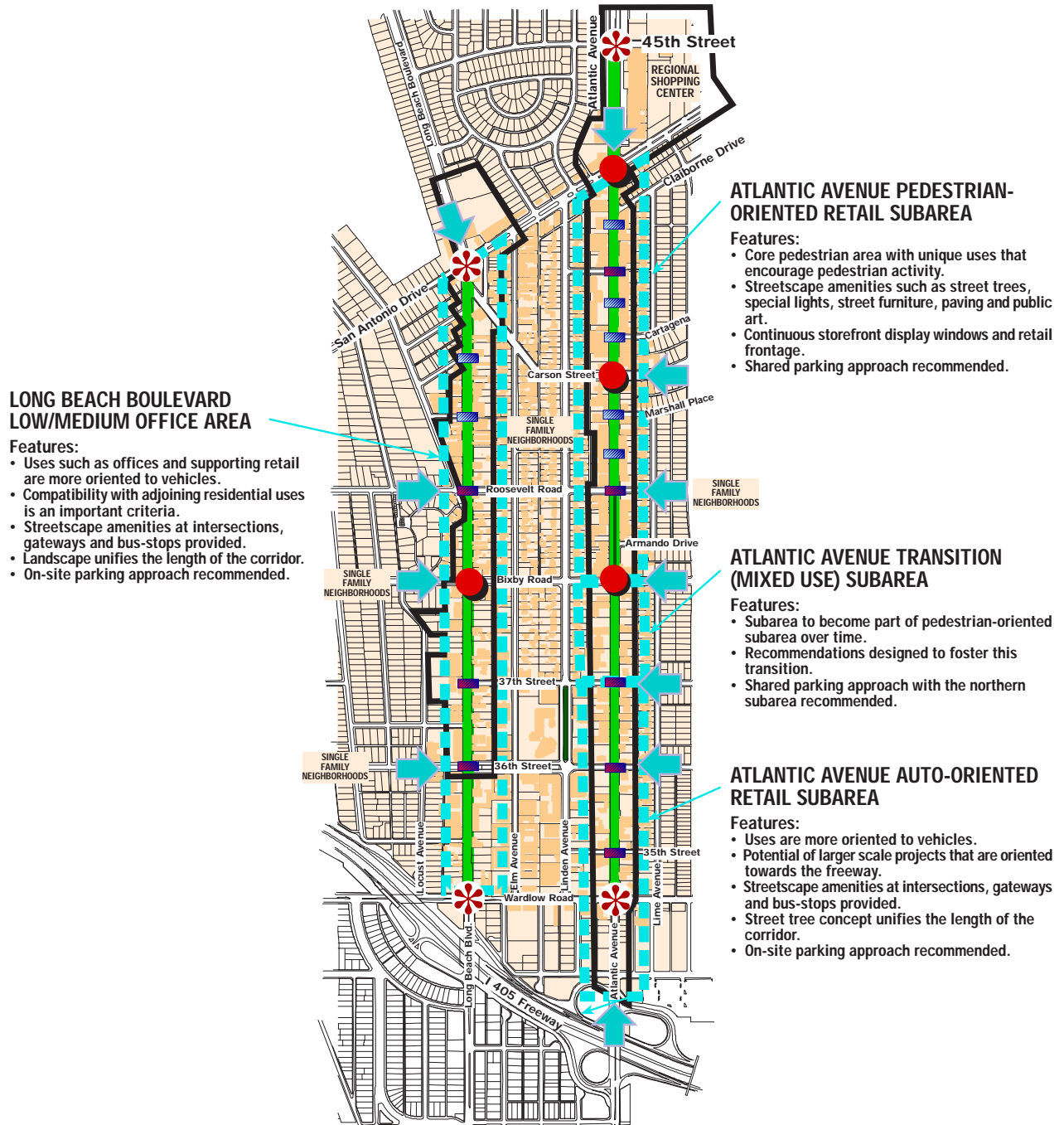
- This corridor, in spite of its length and diversity, is remarkably cohesive in character.
- As the corridor and its uses are primarily vehicle-oriented in nature, the suburban nature of the buildings is appropriate.
- There is potential to further unify the street by implementing a comprehensive landscape program for the whole corridor.
- The congregation of the office garden suites in this part of Southern California is unique and should be preserved. This development type also makes good neighbors to the adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- The vacant sites and under-utilized parcels allow for great potential for future development.
- Exuberant landscaping on the properties adds to the suburban feel of the corridor.
- Design guidelines can reinforce the distinct architectural styles and restore the original quality of the corridor.
- Traffic flow and unobstructed sight lines enhance sign legibility.
- The character of the professional offices in the area allows for more discreet or “low key” type of signage, which will soften the visual transition to the adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Sign improvements have an excellent benefit to cost ratio.

2.6 Overall Concept

The concept proposed for the Bixby Knolls retail and commercial corridors is based on field observations, previous studies, and meetings with the BKBIA Design Committee and City Staff. The major goals of the concept plan are as follows:

- **Create a powerful sense of place** that is both identifiable and definable in the minds of visitors and residents. Creating entry gateways at appropriate points on the two major corridors will enhance the definition of the district. Uses that can be distinctly identified as "Bixby Knolls Uptown" and are not generic (non-chain stores) will also enhance the district's identity. Regional/national chain stores should be required to conform to the character of the area.
- **Provide an exciting mix of uses** that include a range of neighborhood retail, entertainment, professional, business, cultural, and recreational activities. A mix of people-attracting uses such as restaurants, cafes, outdoor dining, galleries, specialty shops with professional offices and businesses will create a "neighborhood downtown," a center of Bixby Knolls where the residents go for both business and pleasure.
- **Enhance the pedestrian experience along Atlantic Avenue and Long Beach Boulevard** by providing both streetscape amenities and roadway modifications. These will vary according to the nature of the subarea. In general, more street trees and other landscaping improvements, pedestrian-scaled lights, directional signage, benches, trash receptacles, and public art should be provided.
- **Take advantage of the freeways proximity** to bring in more customers and activity, especially in the southerly portion of the Bixby Knolls area.
- **Reinforce relationships between residential, community and commercial uses.** Enhance access to the "neighborhood downtown" from adjacent residential areas. The provision of pedestrian amenities and spaces for community interaction will attract residents. Special street lighting, landscaping and special signage should mark the interface of the commercial (Atlantic Avenue and Long Beach Blvd.) with the residential (adjoining single-family neighborhoods). In addition, **create better integration** from Atlantic Avenue and Long Beach Boulevard to local streets leading into the residential neighborhoods by enhancing the buildings and site improvements at street intersections. Buildings and site improvements at all intersections should display the following characteristics:
 - Create bulb-outs, where possible, to neck down the street width, thus slowing vehicular traffic and improving pedestrian crossings.
 - Mark these intersections with enhanced paving, landscaping and signage.
 - Building form should reflect a higher massing at the corners, for example with tower elements.
 - The corners of the buildings should address the intersection at the street level to accentuate the transition from Atlantic Avenue/Long Beach Boulevard to the side streets.
 - Primary entries should be located at the corners. (Buildings may have more than one entry).
- **Create 'landmark intersections'** on Atlantic Avenue and Long Beach Boulevard at intersections with major east-west collector streets. These landmark intersections are intended to create gateways on a vehicular level to the commercial corridors. Four landmark intersections are proposed in the Concept Plan. Three of these intersections are located along Atlantic Avenue at San Antonio Drive, Carson Road and Bixby Road; and one is located at the intersection of Bixby Road with Long Beach Boulevard. In addition to the improvements recommended above, these intersections should also incorporate special street lights, paving, public art, landscaping and signage to mark these intersections.

Figure 2.1: Concept Plan



- STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS
- MEDIAN
- LANDMARK INTERSECTION

- DISTRICT GATEWAY
- Features:
 - Sign Monuments to mark District entries.
 - Connection to the surrounding districts.

- SUBAREA BOUNDARIES
- CONNECTION TO RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

- EXISTING CROSSWALK
- PROPOSED CROSSWALK

2.7 Atlantic Avenue Concept

Atlantic Avenue is neighborhood-retail oriented, serving the area's strong residential core with restaurants, home/office supplies, home furnishings and specialty shops. There are also a large number of medical office uses distributed along the southern half of Atlantic Avenue. The character of Atlantic Avenue changes as one moves from the northern end to the south. The "northern area" from San Antonio Drive to Bixby Road has smaller scale pedestrian-focused retail. The "middle area" from Bixby Road to 37th Street consists primarily of medical offices mixed in with retail. The "southern area" from 37th Street to the 405 Freeway has a focus on vehicular oriented use with several drive-through restaurants, car washes and gas stations.

The Atlantic Avenue corridor is divided into the following subareas:

- Pedestrian-oriented retail subarea (San Antonio Drive to Bixby Road)
- Transition (Mixed-use) subarea (Bixby Road to 37th Street)
- Auto-oriented retail subarea (37th Street to 405 Freeway).

Detailed descriptions for these subareas are provided below:

2.7.1 Pedestrian-oriented retail subarea (San Antonio Drive to Bixby Road)

Land Uses:

This four-block area should be the core of pedestrian activity where cafes, restaurants, outdoor dining, bookstores, boutiques, and other specialty shops are concentrated. This section has the potential of becoming an active, vital community serving commercial area, the pedestrian-oriented center of this "neighborhood downtown". Various actions to achieve these objectives are as follows:

- Attract local retail establishments to this core area to create a distinct and unique identity for the Bixby Knolls district.
- Require chain stores to conform to the character of the area by following the design guidelines set forth in this document. Allowing the generic look of chain stores will lead to the dilution of the desired uniqueness of the district, making it look like any other in Southern California.
- Restrict uses such as offices to upper levels only.
- Encourage outdoor and sidewalk dining to add to the street activity.
- Maintain continuous display storefront window frontage along the street to enhance the retail experience.

Streetscape and Roadway Improvements:

The pedestrian focus can be supported by improvements to the streetscape amenities and emphasizing pedestrian circulation over automobiles by making roadway modifications. In this subarea, it is recommended that pedestrian circulation be emphasized with the traffic slowed down. There are several ways of achieving this:

- The blocks in this subarea are very long. **Add crosswalks at unmarked street intersections and mid-block locations** to allow pedestrians more convenience in crossing the street. These crosswalks should be repaved to increase visibility and mark their importance in the circulation system hierarchy.

These should also be signalized, if possible.

- At the ends of the blocks and at the mid-block crossings, **add bulb-outs** to shorten long blocks and narrow the street crossings, reducing the actual distance the pedestrian has to transverse. This will also shelter the parking spaces. These bulb-outs should be attractively landscaped.
- **Limit the number of curb cuts** along the Atlantic Avenue frontage to allow for a sense of an uninterrupted continuation of the retail frontage as well as improve pedestrian circulation. Actions to achieve this objective include grouping driveways, accessing parking lots from alleys where possible, and encouraging shared parking. These actions should be further studied in relation to a parking study.
- **Maintain the existing median** in the center of the street in the block between Roosevelt and Bixby Roads. This median provides a place of refuge to the pedestrians crossing the street. **Extend the median** northward to San Antonio Drive. The median should be attractively landscaped.
- If extending the median is not an option, another potential action to be explored is to **widen sidewalks** inward towards the street to add space for outdoor dining and pedestrian circulation. While this option is expensive, (it would mean new curb and gutter installation along the length of the street), it will add more space where it is needed – where the pedestrians are.

Improvements to the streetscape can be a powerful unifying element in the environment of a retail-oriented commercial area. The recommendations for this subarea include:

- **Establish a continuous pattern of street trees** that echoes the rhythmic nature of storefronts. The BKBIA has established "Bradford Pear" as the street tree for this subarea and started the implementation in several blocks. This Concept Plan recommends the continuation of this tree type along Atlantic Avenue in an alternating pattern with Mexican Fan Palms. See Chapter 5 for detailed description of the streetscape concept.
- **Add landscaping** (shrubs, flowering plants, etc.) in the bulb-outs and at other appropriate locations along the street to contribute to attractiveness of the area.
- Encourage retail businesses to **provide and maintain flowerpots and other small landscape features** to add to the area's appeal.
- **Install a visually cohesive palette of street furniture** that includes benches, trash receptacles, bike-racks, clocks, tree grates, and bollards.
- **Add items of visual interest** such as public art, sculptures, and water fountains in setback areas, courtyards and paseos to attract attention and allow spaces for people to gather.
- **Enhance light levels** to raise the overall sense of safety, promote a more pedestrian scale, increase pedestrian safety, and enhance the sense of district identity, thus potentially extending usage in the evening and nighttime hours. There are several ways to achieve these objectives:
 - Add pedestrian-scaled street lights to increase light on the sidewalks. An example is shown in the photos on the next page. Utilize either one of the two styles of "acorn" type pedestrian posts now found in the adjacent residential neighborhoods. These should be paired and spaced at a 40 to 60 feet on center.
 - If adding new lights is not possible, another option is to utilize the trunks of the newly added palm trees or existing hi-mast poles as light posts. Attach two adjustable metal halide par 20 or

par 30 fixtures at a minimum height of 20 feet. Mount fixtures facing the sidewalk (not the roadway) and aim down at the sidewalk.

- Add light fixtures or light bollards at the bulb-outs and landmark intersections to demarcate the pedestrian crossings.
- Increase spillover light from the display windows to add to the light levels on the sidewalks.
- Light architectural details and signage on the façades.



Example of pedestrian-oriented lighting mounted on hi-mast poles, University Boulevard, Tucson, Arizona.



Pedestrian-scaled lights found in the adjacent neighborhoods.



Example of facade lighting.

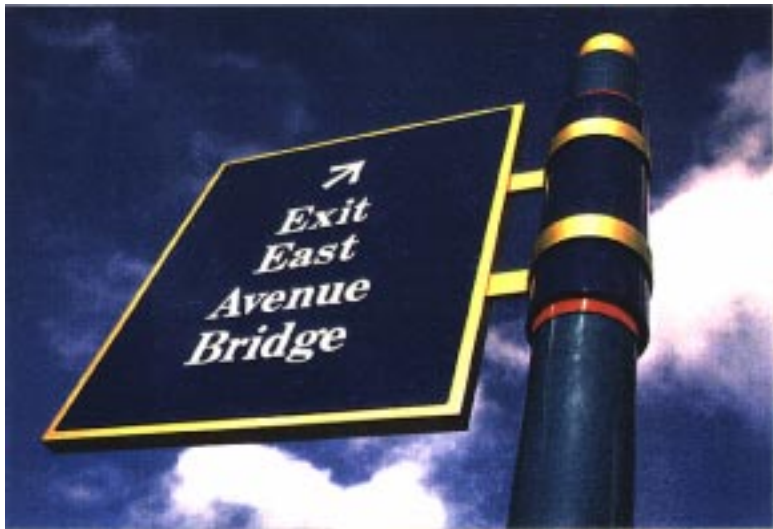
Parking:

Business owners and residents alike perceive parking as a problem. While observation shows ample on-street parking currently available, once the district is thriving, there will be a district-wide parking shortage. The parking issue should be further studied and problems addressed separately under the auspices of a district-wide parking study. Until that study is completed, maintain the existing on-street parking configuration of diagonal parking on the east side of Atlantic Avenue and parallel parking on the west side.

Strategies to alleviate these problems include: encouraging shared parking and the "park once" concept, and better directional signage directing vehicles to off-street parking lots. The creation of shared parking lots will also minimize curb cuts, as each business will not have a driveway leading to its off-street parking. Please see Section 3.1 for more information.



Examples of parking directional signage and site directional signage.



2.7.2 Transition (Mixed-use) subarea (Bixby Road to 37th Street)

Land Use:

This subarea functions as a transition area between the northern pedestrian-oriented subarea and southern auto-oriented subareas. The existing uses along this subarea include medical offices mixed in with retail establishments. This subarea should also have a pedestrian orientation. However, the level of pedestrian activity will be less owing to the noncontinuous nature of the retail frontage. It is recommended that over time, this subarea become an extension of the northern pedestrian-oriented subarea. *Requisite zoning changes (from CCA to CNP) are being recommended as a part of this study.* For this transition to take place, retail uses are strongly encouraged in this subarea while non-retail uses should be located elsewhere in the study area.

Streetscape and Roadway Improvements:

Within this transition area, the emphasis on pedestrian circulation should be maintained as it is anticipated that over time this area will merge into the northern pedestrian-oriented area. Improvements to the streetscape amenities and roadway will aid in that effort. Continue parallel parking on both sides of the street while maintaining two traffic lanes in each direction. Limit the number of curb cuts along the Atlantic Avenue frontage to encourage an uninterrupted continuation of the retail frontage as well as improved pedestrian circulation.

The recommendations for improvements to the streetscape environment in this subarea include:

- **Establish a continuous pattern of street trees.** The choices made in the northern subarea should be also be implemented in this subarea to provide continuity along the entire length of Atlantic Avenue. See Chapter 5 for detailed description of the streetscape concept.
- **Add landscaping** (shrubs, flowering plants, etc.) at appropriate locations along the street to contribute to the attractiveness of the area. Most non-retail buildings in this subarea are setback from the property line. Upgrade and maintain the privately landscaped setback areas.
- **Install a visually cohesive palette of street furniture** that includes benches, trash receptacles, bike-racks, clocks, tree grates, and bollards.
- **Enhance light levels** to raise the perception of safety to potentially extend usage in the evening and nighttime hours. There are several ways to achieve these objectives:
 - Add pedestrian-scaled street lights or add down-lights to the existing hi-mast poles to increase light on the sidewalks.
 - Increase spillover light from the display windows to also add to the light levels on the sidewalks.
 - Light architectural details and signage on the façades.

Parking:

As mentioned in the previous section, business owners and residents alike perceive parking as a problem. While observation shows ample on-street parking currently available, once the district is thriving, there will be a district-wide parking shortage. The parking issue should be further studied and problems addressed separately under the auspices of a district-wide parking study. Until that study is completed, maintaining the existing on-street parallel parking on both sides of Atlantic Avenue is recommended.

2.7.3 Auto-oriented retail subarea (37th Street to Wardlow Road)

Land Use:

This four-block area should market and attract a wider range of users other than just Bixby Knolls residents. The close proximity of the I-405 freeway is an added advantage for reaching a regional market base. The existing and future land uses in this subarea are, and should continue to be, automobile-oriented. Larger projects that require assembling parcels are possible in this subarea and could potentially take advantage of the freeway adjacency.

Streetscape and Roadway Improvements:

The physical environment can be enhanced by improvements to the streetscape. Even though automobile circulation is more dominant than pedestrian circulation within this subarea, pedestrian circulation should be made more convenient and safer. In this subarea, maintain parallel parking on both sides of the street while keeping two traffic lanes in each direction.

Streetscape improvements are a unifying element in commercial areas. The recommendations for this subarea include:

- **Continue the pattern of Mexican Fan Palms** in this subarea to create a visually consistent element along the length of Atlantic Avenue, from San Antonio to the 405 Freeway. See Chapter 5 for detailed description of the streetscape concept.
- **Provide additional landscaping** in the required setbacks and at appropriate locations along the street. Most non-retail buildings in this subarea are setback from the property line. Upgrade and maintain the privately landscaped setback areas.
- **Install a visually cohesive palette of street furniture** that includes benches, trash receptacles, bike-racks, clocks, and tree grates. The palette identified for the northern subarea should be provided at identified locations along this stretch of Atlantic Avenue. These locations should include 'landmark intersections' and bus stops.
- **Add pedestrian-scaled lighting** at street intersections and gateways to increase the perception of safety, add light for pedestrians, and thus potentially increase usage in the evening and nighttime hours.

Parking:

All uses in this subarea are required to provide on-site parking. Screening parking lots with attractive landscaping will create a visually pleasing streetscape. The locations and guidelines for the screening are provided in Chapter 5. As a preventative measure, this subarea should also be further studied and any emerging parking problems addressed under the auspices of the district-wide parking study. Until that study is completed, maintaining the existing on-street parallel parking on both sides of Atlantic Avenue is recommended. As in the northerly subareas, strategies to alleviate these problems may include encouraging shared parking between adjacent uses and better directional signage directing vehicles to off-street parking lots.

2.8 Long Beach Boulevard Concept

Land Use:

The uses along Long Beach Boulevard consist primarily of professional offices and financial institutions. There are several motels that are nonconforming uses along this corridor. The building character along this corridor is low-rise office and retail buildings (one-to-two stories) with a few high-rise office buildings (eight-to-ten stories). Compatibility with the adjacent residential neighborhood is an important criterion. At a community-visioning workshop a few years ago, the residents indicated that they would prefer land uses such as thrift shops that do not serve the immediate community be minimized or even prohibited. Thrift shops are currently permitted with a conditional use permit.

Streetscape and Roadway Improvements:

Providing streetscape amenities will enhance the physical environment along Long Beach Boulevard. Even though automobile circulation will remain more dominant than pedestrian circulation within this subarea, pedestrian circulation should be made more convenient and safer by implementing the following recommended changes:

- **Continue parallel parking** on both sides of the street while keeping the number of traffic lanes at two in each direction.
- The blocks in this subarea are very long and the street stoplights are spaced even farther apart. **Add crosswalks** (and stop lights) at all unmarked intersections with minor streets (35th, 37th Street, etc.) to allow pedestrians more freedom in crossing the street. These crosswalks should be repaved to increase visibility.
- At the intersections of Long Beach Boulevard with the primary east-west pedestrian paths to Atlantic Avenue, **add bulb-outs** to narrow the crosswalks, thus reducing the actual distance the pedestrian has to traverse. These intersections are at Roosevelt Road, Bixby Road and 36th Street. These bulb-outs should be attractively landscaped.

Following are recommendations for improving the streetscape environment along Long Beach Blvd.:

- **Plant a continuous and dense pattern of street trees.** As uninterrupted visibility to the office buildings is not an issue, a denser spacing (25 – 30 feet on center) of street trees is recommended. Large canopied trees such as London Plane or Cupanias will be appropriate for the street scale. The sidewalk width is not consistent throughout the length of Long Beach Boulevard. Where adequate sidewalk width allows, plant street trees in the sidewalk area. At other locations, encourage property owners to plant trees within the setback area. See Chapter 5 for detailed description of the streetscape concept.
- **Create visual east-west pathways** (Roosevelt Street, Bixby Road, and 36th Street) to link the westerly residential neighborhoods with Atlantic Avenue by adding street trees and pedestrian-scaled lighting.
- **Add landscaping** (shrubs, flowering plants, etc.) in the bulb-outs and at other appropriate locations along the street to contribute to the attractiveness of the area.
- Most of the office buildings in this subarea are setback from the property line. **Upgrade and maintain private landscaped areas.**

- **Install a visually cohesive palette of street furniture** that includes benches, trash receptacles, bike-racks, clocks, tree grates, and bollards at bus stops and identified landmark Intersection. This palette may be the same as that chosen for Atlantic Avenue.
- **Add pedestrian-scaled lighting** at the landmark intersection and the east-west connecting streets to raise the perception of safety, add light on the sidewalks, and thus potentially extend pedestrian circulation during the evening and nighttime hours, as residents walk to Atlantic Avenue from the western residential neighborhoods.

Parking:

The current zoning requirement for all parking to be provided on-site should be continued. A stronger emphasis on the need to landscape and screen the parking lots in an attractive manner is recommended. As on Atlantic Avenue, implement strategies such as providing better directional signage guiding vehicles to off-street parking lots to create a more efficient usage of parking. Long Beach Boulevard parking should also be included in the district-wide parking study recommended for Atlantic Avenue.

